

**Remarks**  
**Ambassador James Zumwalt**  
**SAHARAN EXPRESS**  
**Monday, April 27, 1200**

*(As prepared)*

Admiral Cissoko,  
General Diop,  
Commodore Aiken,  
and the entire SAHARAN EXPRESS 2015 team,

Good morning and congratulations on the success of this year's SAHARAN EXPRESS! Thank you for the part you played in. I'd like to say a special thank you to the Commanding Officers of the ships present here today. This year, partners from Cape Verde, France, Mauritania, Morocco, Portugal, Senegal, Spain, Turkey, and the United States all participated in this exercise. The strengthening of our collaboration makes exercises like SAHARAN EXPRESS worthwhile. Thank you for working together toward the common goal of international maritime security.

Often, when I drive along the Corniche, I see fishing pirogues at sea. These day fishermen operate near the coast and return with their catch at the end of the day. Most of the time, they are a visible sign of the economic activity off the coasts of stable, secure countries like Senegal.

Sometimes, the Sahara dust obscures my view of those pirogues. On those days, it is easy to understand the immense challenges facing all of you as the professionals who guarantee the safety and security of those fishermen and their economic livelihood. We rely on you to set sail in your ships, take off in your maritime patrol aircraft, and monitor your radars to safeguard those at sea.

Your countries depend on you not only to protect the pirogue fleets that navigate near the shore but also to combat pirates, drug traffickers, arms smugglers, and illegal fishermen who operate beyond the horizon.

Your actions benefit not only to your own countries but all nations who depend on maritime commerce and maritime resources. Pirates in African waters such as the Gulf of Guinea board ships from all countries. Traffickers smuggle arms, drugs and even human beings across the world

by sea. Recent events in the Mediterranean Sea demonstrate the importance of multinational naval cooperation. Valuable maritime resources transcend national borders, accentuating inter-dependence among countries for their protection. Problems on the high seas affect all of us and require us to work together to solve them. That is what we did here this week.

Thank you again for helping each other improve our sailing skills and for safeguarding those fishermen, and commercial ships at sea.